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ABSTRACT

This Digest describes how, by connecting service, social studies, and citizenship, civic educators have the potential to begin the new millennium by initiating a "Century of the Caring Citizen". Effective methods for bring about the caring citizen are to allow students to learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized experiences that meet actual community needs; to integrate service into students' academic curriculum and provide structured time for thinking, talking, or writing about the service activity; to provide students with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and to enhance what is taught in schools by extending learning into the community and help foster the development of a sense of caring for others. Research indicates that well-conceptualized, well-administered service programs produce positive changes in students, including increased social and personal responsibility, more favorable attitudes toward adults, growth in moral and ego development, and increased self-esteem. For social studies teachers to effectively implement service-learning, they should be involved in service activities in their pre-service training by participating in classrooms where service learning projects are taking place. Existing guidelines on service-learning describe the important components of high-quality programs: (1) provide choice and challenge to students; (2) connect schools and communities in positive ways that meet real needs; and (3) engage in ongoing program assessment and evaluation. Concludes with a list of 12 references. (JH)

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Service, Social Studies, and Citizenship: Connections for the New Century

By Robert Shumer

Service to the community as part of the social studies curriculum teaches active citizenship and democratic processes. This Digest describes how, by connecting service, social studies, and citizenship, civic educators have the potential to begin the new millennium by initiating a "Century of the Caring Citizen".

Connecting Citizenship and Service Through Social Studies. How do young people learn to become critically thoughtful, engaged, active, lifelong citizens? Effective methods include activities such as:

- allowing students to learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized experiences that meet actual community needs;
- integrating service into students' academic curriculum and providing structured time for thinking, talking, or writing about the service activity;
- providing students with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and
- enhancing what is taught in schools by extending learning into the community and helping foster the development of a sense of caring for others.

These practices constitute a working definition of service-learning (National Service Learning Cooperative 1998). While service-learning is not the only way to engage young people in communities to teach civic skills and virtues, service has the potential to play a central role in citizenship education.

Research on the Effects of Service Learning Programs. Although research on service-learning offers mixed findings, studies clearly show that the quality of program implementation matters (Melchior 1998). Intensity (the number of hours per week) and duration (the number of weeks, months, and years of engagement) significantly affect the level of outcomes derived from service-learning initiatives (Conrad & Hedin 1991). A National Center for Education Statistics report found that students who participate in community service activities 35 hours or more during the school year tend to have higher levels of civic development than students who participate less often or not at all. Characteristics of civic development include increased political knowledge, greater confidence in ability to speak at public meetings, and a stronger sense of understanding politics (Niemi & Chapman 1999, 62).

Well-conceptualized, well-administered programs produce positive changes in students, including increased social and personal responsibility, more favorable attitudes toward adults, growth in moral and ego development, and increased self-esteem. There is a universal high regard for service-learning among those who have participated in such programs. For example, in a nationwide survey of nearly 4,000 students involved in service-learning programs, about 75% reported learning "more" and "much more" in these courses than in those taught through traditional methods (Conrad & Hedin 1991).

Promising Pedagogical Practices. In order to have civic value, service-learning must be implemented in such a way that students learn about the policy dimensions of issues addressed in their service activities. Harry Boyte (1991) argues that most service programs lack a vocabulary that draws attention to the deeper public issues surrounding students' personal lives and local communities. Mark Battersby (1998) suggests three principal guidelines for reflection that help build such a vocabulary and create a complete service and learning experience for students. First, students need the opportunity for critical reflection on the politics of the service activity as well as the larger political environment in which service organizations function. Second, experiences should involve appropriate preparation and subsequent reflective action. Finally, students must be encouraged to examine the conditions that create a need for service and the social policies that might address these needs.

Activities involving reflection affect student learning. In a study of mandatory service in Maryland, Davidson (1995) reports that high school students involved in service projects have increased levels of awareness of community issues, but do not always understand the civic connections between service and citizenship. Davidson recommends that in order to make these connections more intentional, the service requirement should be implemented in social studies courses where civic purposes and skills are likely to be included.

Reflecting on community needs and social policies brings a political dimension to service-learning. Kahne and Westheimer (1996) identify two models of service-learning, one focused on charity and the other on change. According to their framework, a charity-oriented program emphasizes giving, whereas a change-oriented program fosters caring. While acknowledging that the two orientations are "by no means neatly distinct," the authors make the important point that "the choice of service-learning activities—like the choice of any curricular activity—has political dimensions."

For social studies teachers to effectively implement service-learning, they should be involved in service activities during their pre-service training. Based on evidence that "teacher education students retain little of what they learn from textbooks and lectures," Rahima Wade (1995) designed a program that combines a methods course on democratic participation with a practicum placing pre-service teachers in classrooms participating in service learning projects. In-service teachers can also partake in similar educational programs.

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Existing guidelines on service-learning, including *Standards of Quality for School-Based Service-Learning* (Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform 1993), *Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning* (Honnet & Poulsen 1989), and *Essential Elements of Service-Learning* (National Service-Learning Cooperative 1998), describe the important components of high-quality programs. These documents emphasize the importance of providing choice and challenge to students, connecting schools and communities in positive ways that meet real needs, and engaging in ongoing program assessment and evaluation. Following these prescriptions for good programming will ensure that service-learning experiences enhance students' achievement of civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with responsible democratic citizenship.

Resources. As more and more educators, researchers, and policymakers recognize the important connections between service-learning and civic education, the number of publications, organizations, and conferences addressing this subject increases. The following organizations provide starting points for further investigation of resources:

- Center for Civic Education
  Telephone: 818/591-9321
  Web: http://www.civiced.org/

- Center for Democracy and Citizenship, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
  Telephone: 612/625-0142
  Web: http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/cdc/

- Civic Practices Network
  Telephone: 617/736-4890
  Web: http://www.cpn.org/

- Close-Up Foundation
  Toll-free telephone: 800/CLOSE-UP
  TTY: 800/336-2167
  Web: http://www.closeup.org/

- Constitutional Rights Foundation
  Telephone: 213/487-5590
  Web: http://www.crf-usa.org/

- Corporation for National Service
  Telephone: 202/606-5000
  Web: http://www.cns.gov/

- National Service Learning Clearinghouse
  Toll-free telephone/TTY: 800/808-7378
  Web: http://www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu/

References and ERIC Resources. The following list of resources includes references used to prepare this Digest. The items followed by an ED number are available in microfiche and/or paper copies from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). For information about prices, contact EDRS, 7420 Fullerton Road, Suite 110, Springfield, Virginia 22153-2852; telephone numbers are (703) 440-1400 and (800) 443-3742. Entries followed by an EJ number, annotated monthly in CURRENT INDEX TO JOURNALS IN EDUCATION (CIJE), are not available through EDRS. However, they can be located in the journal section of most larger libraries by using the bibliographic information provided, requested through Interlibrary Loan, or ordered from commercial reprint services.

Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform. STANDARDS OF QUALITY FOR SCHOOL-BASED SERVICE-LEARNING. Chester, VT: Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform, 1993.

Battersby, Mark. "Education for Citizenship: Service-Learning and the Reflective Citizen." LEARNING QUARTERLY 2 (December 1998): 3-6.

Boyte, Henry. "Community Service and Civic Education." PHI DELTA KAPPAN 72 (June 1991): 765-767. EJ 426 976.

Conrad, Dan, and Diane Hedin. "School Based Community Service: What We Know from Research and Theory." PHI DELTA KAPPAN 72 (June 1991): 743-749. EJ 426 971.

Davidson, M. THE INFLUENCES OF MANDATORY SERVICE LEARNING ON THE ATTITUDES TOWARD POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT OF A SELECTED GROUP OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS. Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1995.

Honnet, Ellen Porter, and Susan J. Poulsen. PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR COMBINING SERVICE AND LEARNING: A WINGSPREAD SPECIAL REPORT. Racine, WI: The Johnson Foundation, 1989.

Kahne, Joseph, and Joel Westheimer. "In the Service of What? The Politics of Service Learning." PHI DELTA KAPPAN 77 (May 1996): 592-599. EJ 524 359.

Melchior, Alan. NATIONAL EVALUATION OF LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, 1998.

National Center for Education Statistics. PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION STATISTICS. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998. ED 418 991.

National Service-Learning Cooperative. ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING. St. Paul, MN: National Youth Leadership Council, 1998.

Niemi, Richard G., and Christopher Chapman. THE CIVIC DEVELOPMENT OF 9TH THROUGH 12TH GRADE STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES: 1996. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 1999.

Wade, Rahima. "Developing Active Citizens: Community Service Learning in Social Studies Teacher Education." SOCIAL STUDIES 86 (May-June 1995): 122-128. EJ 510 829.

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